1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[ARCHERS]

This method of hunting serves only for antelope; Schebesta never saw okapi, wild boar, or big game brought in from such a hunt. 224 [136]

The beat hunt seldom takes place, says Schebesta (1941, 98), because it requires the participation of large numbers of people, often from more than one band, including women and young girls, who can seldom be persuaded to take part. Also, it occupies an entire day. Ritual preparations include setting fire to certain herbs by the hunt leaders (an old man and an old widow in the hunt described by Schebesta). This produces a dense smoke, the sight and scent of which bring the hunters to the attention of their God. The old widow asks that rain should not surprise them. The ritual takes place a little way off from the camp; the other members of the hunt when they arrive rub their temples and eyes with the cinders, as did the old couple, in order to see better. The *bɛgbe* hunt then sets out, and, when a suitable spot is found, the women make their petards from a certain bush (Efe: *mapiu*). By rolling the leafy 224 372 [776] [782] [828] 224 824

[P.172-C]

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 173-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 8 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[ARCHERS]

[P.189-C]

Any abnormal personal condition indicates the presence of Toré: mental confusion or disorder, shivering spells, goose flesh, dreams, bad luck, and misfortune. Toré is everywhere. He is absolute lord of the forest, of all animals and human beings, of life and death. Everything belongs to him because he created everything, but the forest is his particular kingdom. He is offended by failure to make him offerings from the chase, by quarrels within the band, by disrespect for elders, by infraction of lineage exogamy, by failure to make appropriate sacrifices. He punishes such actions or omissions by causing trees to fall, by visiting man-eating leopards on the community (or individual) concerned, by closing the forest to the hunter.

Essentially the giver of all good, he is also the source of death and misfortune. Schebesta finds it difficult to reconcile the undoubted affection with which the archers respect their God and their fear of him. They call him "father" and "grandfather," acknowledging him as the giver of the good life, on the one hand, while, on the other, they fear him in his disconcerting association with fatality.

[ARCHERS]

795 261 [174] The soul, the word for which designates the pulse, appears to return to God (Toré) in the sky, where it becomes a star. The other vital force mentioned, *megbe*, changes into the totem after death. Death is inevitable, the will of God calling back the *boru e'i*.

794 828 Dreams are events that actually befall the soul during sleep, according to the archers. While the body sleeps, the *boru e'i* leave it and wander at will. In this way God and the dead can manifest themselves during sleep.

795 [177] The northern archers think of a realm for the souls of the dead, situated in ravines and caves, and of a lord of this realm of the dead. Both the dead and their god are, like the God of the Undergrowth, termed "Toré"; but Schebesta attributes this to a confusion of properly Pygmy notions (the cult of *toré* as described by him) and adopted villager notions (i.e., the cult [169] of the dead). Schebesta holds that the true Mbuti have no cult of the dead. On death one of the vital principles takes the form of a star, living with the celestial divinity, remote from the Mbuti world.

[P. 191-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

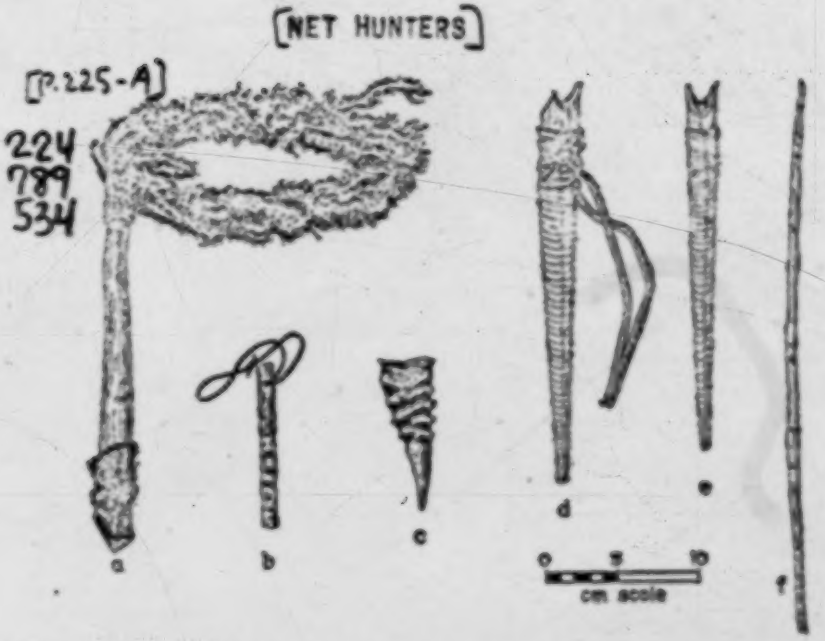

FIG. 51. Magical paraphernalia, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri. a. Pipe, *akbelea*, attached to fur headband; worn by a few net hunters, the pipe sometimes being blown before they set out on a hunt. b. Wooden whistle, *angbelu*. c. Antelope horn, *anjo*, used to carry paste sometimes smeared on the face to heighten the senses of smell, sound, and sight. d. Honey whistle, *madi*, used during the honey season for "calling" the honey. e. Honey whistle, *madi*. f. Hunting whistle, *manyongi*, found in northwest area; stuck in the ground near a special hunting fire in the camp and pointing in the direction in which the hunt has gone.

1: Turnbull E-4.5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P-264-C]

As might be expected, cleverness is frequently associated with smallness. In several legends the whole purport is the superiority (in this respect) of small animals over large. It is not difficult to identify the smaller, clever animal as the Pygmy, nor the larger, more clumsy, and stupid animal as the villager. Already we are on the fringe of a borderline world. The animal and the human worlds are related with regard to this quality of cleverness, or trickery, a quality that seems to be essentially animal rather than Pygmy. By cultivating this quality, by imitation, the Pygmy is able to establish a relatively satisfactory relationship between the two worlds. But "cleverness" also brings the Pygmy into relationship with the spiritual world. It is through cleverness, for instance, that he is able to thwart the trickery of the forest *satani*.

539 828 825 [186]

Old age, with its greater store of experience, connotes cleverness to the Pygmy. Old people are regarded as possessing a special abundance of this quality, which automatically associates them more closely with the animal and spiritual

539 828 577 888

Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

worlds. A number of legends deal with the cleverness of old people. There are old aunts and old grandmothers who eat children left in their care, and old men and women are frequently deserted by the Pygmies when they move camp (in their legends). Yet these old people can use their powers for good, if so inclined, as in the legend of the old woman with yaws who tried to save three young Pygmies from being killed and eaten by a tricky old man. Also, of course, it is the old people who have the most success in dealing with the *satani*. But (discussion of this aspect of old age is given in the next section) the legends do reveal quite clearly that old age, when accompanied by disability, is regarded with loathing by the Pygmies as, indeed, is disability by itself. In the legends, old people and cripples are given every chance to prove that they are still useful members of society. The old cripple who is deserted but who can kill a *satani* and rejoin his hunting group is welcomed back. But another old cripple who cannot move at all when he is deserted, although he kills two *satani* who attack him, is left to die. Old women seem particularly suspect, and I cite here an example of sanctioned matricide. I might add that I have never known this to occur and that, in my experience, the Mbuti take great care of their old people. At the same time I must admit to having seen no complete cripples and to having heard disquieting stories

[P264-D]

I: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

539 825 "We'll fight him." One of the chimpanzees grabbed at the Pygmy, but meanwhile the Pygmy had taken up his spear. The Pygmy killed the chimpanzee. The others said, "What did the Pygmy kill our brother with?" And one answered, "It seemed to be with the root of a tree." So another of the chimpanzees gathered up the roots of the trees and threw them at the Pygmy. The Pygmy killed him with his spear. The remaining chimpanzees sat down and tried to puzzle this out. One of them searched all round and found the spear. He took it and killed the Pygmy. The chimpanzees then gathered some leaves and put them over the Pygmy. They all left.

The Pygmy's brother went to look for him. He found him dead, covered with leaves. He said, "What could have happened? Who killed my brother?"

Bari

539 825 828 Leopards and turtles are tricky animals that teach the Pygmy much of his cleverness in legend. They appear frequently, and it is always their cleverness and trickery that are stressed. But here we consider another aspect of these animal tales. Not only is it always their cleverness and trickery that are stressed, thus automatically associating them with the supernatural, if only indirectly, but they are often identified with villagers. In talking of villagers, in legend, more often than not the Pygmy gives them animal form. The villager is very defi-

539 825 828 186

[p. 266-B]

Lr Turnbull E-4. 8 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[p. 266-c]

nitely not included on the human side of the opposition between the animal and human worlds (the villager is often associated with an excess of cleverness). A frequently heard motif is for a Pygmy to wound an animal with a spear or an arrow. The animal escapes, carrying away the weapon. Later, the Pygmy discovers that weapon, covered with blood, hidden in the house of some Bira villager. The Pygmy then knows that he had, in fact, wounded a villager who had changed into an animal. 539 825 186 (828).

The collection includes one very similar legend in which exactly the same motif is used, accounting for enmity between two Pygmy hunting groups. A Pygmy wounds an elephant with a spear, and the elephant escapes, carrying away the spear. The Pygmy's father sends his son off to look for the lost spear. On his way through a village, he meets a Bira who says he has seen the spear in the hut of the Pygmy's best friend, another Pygmy. The Bira helps to conceal the unfortunate hunter in his friend's hut; at night, when his friend is sleeping, he

1: Turnbull E 4.5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

difficult to define. Perhaps the nearest approach is to say that, while trickery is not a human quality, it is one that the human (i.e., the Pygmy) can cultivate and use to deal with those to whom it properly belongs—animals, *satani*, and in certain circumstances the villagers.

Another significant feature in this collection of legends is the total absence of reference to witchcraft and sorcery. This is also reflected in daily life, where magical practices are almost non-existent. We are here considering the legends, so shall not digress with a discussion of Mbuti magic, but it seems appropriate to mention the coincidence of two deficiencies—a lack of any real body of traditional folklore, on the one hand, and a lack of traditional magical belief and practice, on the other.[1] Legends are invented *ad hoc* or altered and adapted to suit varying circumstances. Even when answering questions, the Mbuti often invents a myth and tells it as though it were fact. The recounting of an incident during a hunt or while honey gathering often appears in the form of a legend. There

[1] The possible correlation of these two was suggested during a discussion with Dr. Michael Smith at the University of the West Indies. Though he cannot be held responsible for the exact interpretation given here, I am grateful to him for the stimulus.

[P270-D]

2: Turnbull E-S (1951-1958) 1965 PO4 Pygmies PO4
Mbuti

having been there they do not know what it is like, and not knowing what it is like they cannot predict what their behavior will be. They say that to try and go into the future is to "walk blindly," and their response to villagers, missionaries or any who claim a knowledge of afterlife is to say, "How do you know. Have you died and been there?" They liken such discussion to the talk of a hunter who suggests hunting in a certain place without ever having been there, or a woman who goes off in a set direction to gather a certain kind of mushroom without having seen them growing in any particular place there. These are people who act "emptily," or whose heads are loose and not properly attached to the body.

However, this disclaimer to absolute knowledge of the nature of the future or of afterlife is in itself a characteristic that I found to be universal among the Mbuti, at least within my own experience. This did not prevent individuals from having ideas about the unknown, but as already indicated, such speculation was considered as fruitless, and took the form of legend and was listened to with interest, and often with amusement. Such speculations, whether spontaneous or in the form of established legends, do not reveal any consistency in detail, which appears to be a matter of individual imagination, but there are broad areas of belief that seem widespread among both archers and net-hunters.

There is a belief in a power greater than the Mbuti themselves and not of the natural order of the world they see and know around them. Insofar as this is stated to be a belief, and not knowledge, it may be considered a spiritual power, the spirit being a level of existence that the Mbuti do not claim to understand but which they see as necessarily existing in order to explain the nature of the world's unknowns. Again the terminology is hopelessly confused, the Epulu Mbuti using, in one instance, no less than five terms interchangeably—*pepo, keti, boru, roho, satani*. These terms are drawn from Lesé, Bira, Ndaka and Ngwana, among which tribes of villagers they are also to some extent interchanged, each change bringing a different shade of meaning. For the Mbuti they do not indicate clearly differentiated elements that make up the physical and spiritual being of man, but rather indicate this basic belief that man himself is in part spiritual and that his life derives not from the flesh but from some other source. All five terms are used equally to denote this personal force. But each one is also used to denote different aspects of that force, and the Mbuti usage again in no way coincides with that of the villagers,

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1956) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

nor does the usage of one band necessarily coincide with the usage of another band.

The divers aspects of spiritual power that are generally recognized are as follows:

Each man and each animal (and according to most Mbuti, even the inanimate and vegetable worlds) is endowed to a greater or lesser extent with such power.

This power derives from a single source whose physical manifestation is the forest itself. Opinion differs as to whether this means the vegetable forest, or the forest totality, including the Mbuti themselves. Again there is a multiplicity of names to represent this single power source, and it is most easily translated simply as "the forest" (*ndura*), for this is ultimately how the Mbuti themselves describe it.

Also deriving from the prime source of spiritual power are certain disembodied spirits which, like the Mbuti, inhabit the forest. Their existence, for all practical purposes, does not impinge upon that of the Mbuti; they have no power to harm or help, though there is a vague belief that there might be a conflict of interests at times, and any unexplained mishap may be explained in this way. The disembodied spirits are generally thought of as living much the same kind of existence as the Mbuti, for as they themselves say, what other kind of existence can there be in the forest? Thus, someone who trips while chasing an animal may say he collided with a *keti* (the term used by the Epulu Mbuti for this disembodied spirit as well as for the more generalized spiritual power) who was chasing the same animal. The mysterious absence of game in an unhunted area is explained by saying that the *keti* must have hunted it out. But there is no sense of competition or rivalry, and the *keti* are thought about only when such explanations are needed.

The Mbuti also believe in individual personality, which is essentially of the body rather than of the spirit, but which is enhanced and activated by the spirit. This enables individuals to speak with conviction and to justify their actions or thoughts by saying that their "heart" is pleased, for the heart is generally considered the location of this personality, which when displeased jumps and leaps about inside the chest.

The same five terms, all of which may be used to denote the general concept of personal force, do, however, also have individual and particular meanings by which we can perceive something more of the system of belief of the Epulu Mbuti.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1960) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

PEPO

The life force that animates all moving, living things, without which they would be mere vegetable growths, unable to move or think. The word *pepo* also has connotations of air and wind, and breathing is thought of as a manifestation of *pepo*. A gale of wind, then, is interpreted by some Mbuti as the breath of the forest itself (*pepo nde ndura*), as the breath of the disembodied spirits, or *keti* (*pepo nde baketi*).

KETI

Disembodied spirits, human and animal, who are not necessarily the spirits of the dead but may be independent manifestations of the forest, and who are disembodied only in that they are invisible to the Mbuti. They have an existence otherwise comparable to that of the Mbuti, and are likewise animated by *pepo*. There is no conflict of interests between them and the Mbuti, though occasionally the two worlds inadvertently become confused. An Mbuti may be in hot pursuit of an animal that suddenly disappears; he is likely to say that it must have been *keti*. An animal mysteriously drops dead; it was killed by a *keti* hunter (*keti a mu'e*) who thought he was in pursuit of a *keti* animal. Hallucinations and dreams are primarily the result of accidentally slipping from the one world into the other. All such meetings of *keti* and Mbuti are regarded as abnormal, and are never deliberately sought. They do not exactly induce fear, but there is undeniably the belief that one might cross over so effectively that one would never come back. The Mbuti say that if this happened you might not even know you had crossed over, which indicates that they conceive of the *keti* world as a mirror of their own.[1] Dreams, then, do not convey authority as being divine portents but, being real experience of a mirror world, they are, like all experiences, to be learned from. Thus Ambosu dreamed constantly that he was singing into the *molimo* trumpet. This did not give him the right to take up this role,

[1] On two occasions I heard *elokumou* described laughingly as a dance of the *keti*. The dance, involving a reversal of the sexes, is primarily associated with the *molimo*, hence with the spirit and supernatural world. There is a hunting dance in which there is a rapid succession of changes in direction, the hunters becoming the hunted and vice versa. Yet another instance of Mbuti recognition of reversal is seen in the legend of the Mbuti plantation (see Chapter 12), in which the Mbuti are the cultivators threatened by the animals of the forest (elephants), who undoubtedly represent the villagers.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1961-1968) 1985 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

but everyone agreed that it was a clear indication that he should try. He became the leading trumpet singer, then, not through divine choice but simply through his experience in the *keti* world. He was not regarded as more spiritual, merely as more experienced. However, insofar as both Mbuti and *keti* derive their *pepo* from the forest, if the forest wills them to hunt together in the same time and place then the mirror images coincide exactly and it is, indeed, a "strong" hunt. Such coincidence is exhausting, however, and it is not something actively wished for except, possibly, in times of particularly poor hunting. Ideally the Mbuti and the *keti* should follow each other closely, but always remain just slightly apart.

BORU

A rather difficult concept of the "house" (*endu*—the same word as for a hut) inhabited by *pepo*. The human and animal body of flesh and blood is, in a sense, *boru*, and so is the invisibility of the *keti*. It is a term seldom used, but the concept affords a firm basis for a code of respect for the body, abuse or mutilation of which may drive away the *pepo*, causing "death" (which for the Mbuti is simply the departure of *pepo* and its return to the forest or the world of *keti*). Thus physical violence as a means of settling a dispute is abhorred as a sacrilege. A sound thrashing is perfectly in order, but any violence that produces blood causes an opening through which *pepo* may escape. For although associated with air and wind and thus with breath, it is not thought of as *being* any of these things, and its exact means of escape is unknown. The bodily apertures are all regarded as requiring attention, however, as possible avenues. It might be pointed out here that insofar as *pepo* is associated with life and may escape through these apertures, this is perfectly consistent with the Mbuti recognition of the sexual act as a means of conveying life, though they do not explicitly refer to semen as *pepo*. It is also consistent with the variations on the sexual act found in the *ekokomea* dance, where not only are the sexes reversed but attention is drawn to the less usual apertures, to be somewhat delicate. The role of *ekokomea* as a major feature of the death festival becomes immediately more understandable, its burlesque form allowing for the stated antipathy of the Mbuti to the unproductive forms of sexual perversion *ekokomea* so graphically depicts.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

ROHO

The personality of the individual dies with the body and is the combination of a particular *boru* and *pepo*. It is associated with the heart and is spoken of as being hot or cold, sometimes as noisy or quiet. Hot and noisy are generally bad qualities, cool and quiet are good. But properly controlled heat and noise can be useful, though dangerous, for both are sometimes thought of as being "strong." The state of an individual's *roho* may be cited as justification for his actions, and nobody can gainsay him, for it is bad to go against one's *roho*. However, a man or woman who is constantly calling on his or her *roho* to justify antisocial acts such as laziness or quarrelsomeness may be said to have a bad *roho*, and will be shunned.

SATANI (also *Shaitani*)

This is a concept derived from the villagers, and is for the Mbuti more in the realm of folklore than belief, for *satani* are, to the villagers, malevolent and dangerous forest spirits. The Mbuti use the term in this sense only when recounting a village tale or a tale concerning villagers, for they essentially disbelieve in such evil spirits. However, they sometimes use the term, particularly if talking in Ngwana (to which language it belongs), as synonymous with *keti*. An additional complication: When talking in Bira, they may use *keti* (a Bira word) in the sense of the village Bira, which is the same as the Ngwana *satani*, or evil spirits. However, in the forest context there is no concept of *keti* or *satani* as conceived by the villager, the only spirits being the *keti* as described above, invisible mirror images of the Mbuti themselves, no better and no worse. (Conversely, in the village world all the spirits of the forest are malevolent and dangerous; there is no concept parallel to that of the Mbuti concept of forest spirit.)

THE GODHEAD

As the Mbuti themselves strenuously refuse to admit there is any sense in trying to describe what we here call "the godhead" unless you have seen it, there is not much sense in our trying to do so. Rather, by looking at various aspects of Mbuti life we can discern the exis-

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

greater *molimo*. In the case of a hunting *molimo*, the initiative is taken by the younger hunters, who sit together around a fire and simply begin singing. In the case of sickness, the initiative is taken by the adult men of the family concerned if the sick person is a child, and if the sick person is an adult the *molimo* will be initiated by his or her male age mates.

The hunting inevitably gets better sooner or later, and the lesser *molimo*, once begun, will continue until it does. But sickness may develop into death, in which case there will be an immediate change of camp, following an uncomplicated and informal burial, and the commencement of the greater *molimo*.

THE GREATER *MOLIMO* (*molimo mangbo*)

In a previous account (Turnbull, 1960, pp. 307–340), the general procedure of the greater *molimo* was outlined, and it was indicated that there is no set rule as to when a greater *molimo* should be held. Certainly it is not held for every death within the band, not even for every adult death. It may, on the other hand, be held for a child. It is largely a question of *roho*, and this is determined by a number of considerations such as the nature of the death, the importance of the deceased to the band, and the general tenor of life in the band at that moment, particularly the condition of hunting. A combination of poor hunting and ill humor and general sickness, associated with the death of a child, even of a stranger child temporarily within the band, may well occasion a *molimo*, for the total combination indicates that the forest is "sleeping" (*é langé toro*). On the other hand, the death of a great hunter, through his own fault or through sickness but at a time of good hunting and general contentment, may pass unmarked except by the usual summary burial and change of camp, all expression of grief being confined to the immediate family concerned.

One other consideration not without importance is the fact that whoever initiates a *molimo* festival undertakes a responsibility that may become a burden. He has to see that everyone cooperates in providing food, and when, as sometimes happens, the response is meager, he has somehow to provide enough himself for the society's evening repast. As a greater *molimo* is not likely to last under a month, except possibly for a child under circumstances which otherwise become quickly improved, the economic burden is one to cause careful consideration.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

An occasion such as that described (Turnbull, *ibid.*) for old Balekimito would lead to a greater *molimo* without any hesitation, however, for the death of this much loved old lady affected everyone's *roho*. On the other hand, the *molimo* held for Cephu's daughter Teresa was initiated by Njobo, Cephu claiming he did not have a trumpet. It was held not so much out of respect for the girl but because conditions were bad at the time, there being much sickness and discontent. However, Cephu did not seem to be pulling his own weight, economically, and so the festival came to an abrupt end after only a week. If people found their *roho* upset at all, that was more because of Cephu's cupidity than because of the death of his daughter.

To recapitulate the essential elements of the greater *molimo*, as held for Balekimito:

Death is accepted as a natural event and does not lead to any accusations of witchcraft or sorcery, except in the village context. Such grief as is expressed is genuine, and not formal, again except in the village context. It is accepted with regret, and although regarded as natural and inevitable, there is nonetheless a feeling that this is the one really imperfect thing in Mbuti life. The expressed belief that death comes when the forest is sleeping does not quite tally with the factual acceptance of death by the Mbuti, but there is absolutely no feeling of resentment or blame attached to the forest because of death. The felt need to "awaken" the forest and to "rejoice" the forest is occasioned more by the fact that all the living have been brought closer to death and have, to some extent, been touched by it. They consequently need reassurance, not only for the continuation of their own lives but for the continuity of the Mbuti.

The factual attitude to death is seen in the practice of burial, which in the forest is performed as simply and quickly as possible. It is prolonged and attended by ritual only in the village context (see p. 74 *seq.*, 143). Burial is primarily the concern of the immediate nuclear family, who may be assisted by friends or relatives. Too much display of grief is considered very bad, and one of the major concerns of the ensuing *molimo* is to reaffirm life. In a sense, then, the *molimo* is more properly associated with life, occasioned though it may be by death.

The burial over, the camp is abandoned and the mourners are at once under an even stricter obligation to minimize their demonstrations of grief. The opening of the *molimo* festival is informal and casual, and depends on how long it takes for the new camp to get set-

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1956) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

bow and arrows and started to walk out of the camp. His son Makubuni, one of the hunters, called after him that he was going "emptily" (*ue ke bulé*)—using the KiNgwana word for "emptily," with its connotations of war—(See footnote to p. 295) and without reason. Makubuni pointed out that all the noise had ceased and that now there was *ekimi*, or quiet. Tungana stopped, listened, said that he did not want to kill the camp so he would come back, but from now on there must be nothing but *ekimi* and no more jumping in and out of his hearth, spoiling his food, destroying his fire.

Ekianga continued to sleep with Amaboru's sister, but Amaboru no longer beat Ekianga's sister in retaliation. On the contrary, even before Tungana's grumbling protests had died down, he was off getting some herbs to soothe his wife's wounds. And if the camp had been upset by noise rather than silence, the hunters would have killed it with more noise. The ultimate solution generally lies in the hands of the elders, but the process of restoring equilibrium is initiated by the hunters' fulfilling their duty of making noise. Thus though noise cannot be said to be good, its use (properly controlled) is recognized as having beneficial potentialities.

5. QUIET (*ekimi*) is not merely the opposite of noise; it is something else and it is the ultimate goal toward which life is directed. As with noise, its practical advantages are plain, particularly on the hunt. It is also recognized as an indication that all is well; a quiet camp is a camp untroubled by dissension, a quiet child is a well-fed child, and so forth. In the same way that noise is associated with heat, so is quiet associated with coolness, and this is generally a desirable quality, whereas heat is undesirable.[6] The plaintive cry of the elders when trying to stop an argument or settle a dispute is often "*Me oki akami, me toni akami; me kondi ekimi, ndura ekondi ekimi*"—"I hear noise, I refuse noise; I love quiet, the forest loves quiet."

The ideal is quiet, and quietness is associated with the forest. The concept is inseparable from the concept of joy, which is *ekimi mota*, or "powerful quietness." Joy is an intensification of quietness and is brought about by the occurrence of the norm: good hunting, good weather, good health, harmonious relations, plenty of children. These conditions do not always prevail, in which case active steps have to be taken to improve the hunt, to be less disputatious, to keep better health, to have more children, and to drive bad weather away. En-

[6] The village is in fact, as in thought, hot and noisy, whereas the forest is cool and quiet.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1956) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

deavor of this kind, however, is recognised as being fraught with difficulty, and there is another way that is both easier and more sure, for *ekimi mota* is produced by song. The process of "rejoicing the forest" is a process of creating *ekimi mota* where it does not exist, of intensifying mere *ekimi* through song.

The term for "rejoicing the forest" in the Epulu area is *bongisa ndura*. In KiNgwana the verb is either *furahisa* or *ponisa*, there being no precise equivalent to *bongisa*. *Furahisa* is closer to the English concept of joy, involving festivity; *ponisa*, however, means to cure. The KiNgwana words are both used by the Mbuti in this context, interchangeably, and the meaning of *bongisa* lies between them, derived as it is from *bonga*, meaning good, in an all-inclusive sense.

Perhaps the exact connotation of "rejoicing the forest" is best described by the process itself, which brings joy through joy. Singing gives the Mbuti intense satisfaction. They say it makes them feel good, in the sense of feeling joyful. The mood of song is joyful, even when it is a *molimo* song on the occasion of death. By creating a mood of joy within themselves the Mbuti convey that joy to the forest, which returns it, restoring *ekimi* or even *ekimi mota* to the camp. To describe song as mere "curing" would not quite cover the essential sharing process implied by the term *bongisa ndura*. Song is known, to the Mbuti, to have the infallible power of filling the forest with *ekimi mota*. It is sometimes described as being like the act of copulation in the moonlight, or wherever the individual talking feels that act to be the most intense and beautiful. The Mbuti say "*su bongisa ndura, ndura pisu ekimi*"—"we rejoice the forest, the forest gives us quiet." The distinction is simple, for joy is *ekimi mota*, an intensification of *ekimi*, and as such is not the norm and can only be temporary. Far more important to the Mbuti is that they should have, on a less temporary if less exalted level, the norm of *ekimi*.

While the forest cannot fail to be rejoiced by song, it may well, for one reason or another, be displeased, as a father may be displeased with his children (a perfectly common Mbuti metaphor), and withhold *ekimi* for a long time. The fact that singing brings joy to the Mbuti, filling them with *ekimi mota*, does not mean that it is not also hard work. For the forest is not content with one song. If singing is undertaken at all, and particularly if it is undertaken for purposes of restoring lost *ekimi* (i.e., if it is to be a *molimo* festival), it must be long and continuous. After a fest of singing every night, from shortly after dusk to an hour before sunrise, the Mbuti set off to hunt

3: Turnbull E-S (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

atmosphere was so tense I wondered if there was at last going to be a real accusation of witchcraft, though from what I had seen the Pygmies had no great belief in such things. But Moke's first words put me at ease. Choking back a little sob, he managed to say in a matter-of-fact way, "She died well."

There was a general nodding of heads. Manyalibo, who was a nephew of Balekimito's, said in his gruff way that everyone should be happy that she had lived so long, happy that she had died so well, and that all this wailing should stop at once. He added that the death was a "big thing," and that it was a "matter for the forest." There was a silence, and, looking around to make sure that there were no women about, Manyalibo announced, "I shall call out my molimo, and we will feast not for a week but for a month, or two months, or even three; we shall feast the molimo and make the forest happy."

Njobo, the great elephant hunter, had the final say. He stirred the fire idly with a stick, sending showers of sparks and ashes up into the warm air. "We have been in the village too long," he said. "We should have gone back to the forest before; that is where we belong. Now we must go back, far away from the village and from the people of the village. It is a bad place."

He said that a few would stay behind to finish the work on my house, but that the rest of us should gather together all the food we could and be ready to move within a couple of days. The next day we would put Balekimito in the ground, and maybe the day after that we would leave.

At this everyone cheered up visibly and began criticizing the women and children who were still pouring in and out of Ekianga's house, beating themselves and crying. Masisi said crossly that they would never behave this way if they were in the forest, and as he talked he raised his voice until he worked himself into a real temper. He stalked out of the veranda and down to the far end of the little

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

form that enables them in a moment to know the exact number thrown down. And for another the villagers are not so nimble as the Pygmies. When a Pygmy sees that he is going to lose by a couple of beans, he quickly drops them from the store he has concealed between his fingers, or even in his hair, thus by a triumphant jerk of his hands or his head throwing in the winning beans.

The villagers left that camp stripped of their fish, their tobacco, and whatever else they had to gamble away, and they soon came to prefer an alternative route that by-passed our camp.

There are a few villagers that are welcome in a Pygmy camp, but they are rare. Others can come with sackloads of food and still get a cold reception. I have seen this happen; as soon as the Pygmies have divided up the food they send the villagers on their way. But others can come empty-handed and be received gladly, because they understand the Pygmies and the forest. For the Pygmies this is the criterion of a "real person," as opposed to the animal-humans who live in permanent villages out in the open, away from the shelter and affection of the trees.

Any visitations by villagers are temporary, and they usually have some political significance. A Negro chief who wants to win more Pygmies to his village may send out a son with gifts to stay in a Pygmy camp. Every day more gifts and food are sent out so that he can distribute these. It is a risky business because, as the villagers say, "The BaMbuti eat us up until we have nothing left for ourselves!" But if a chief's son wins the affection of the Pygmies, his father will have won a steady supply of meat—for a time, anyway.

One afternoon I saw two village girls arrive, followed by two servants who threw down loads of plantains and sweet bananas, and a sack of manioc flour. The servants left and the girls came over and sat down unconcernedly at Masamba's fire. Masamba came out of her hut and greeted them with warmth, and soon a number of

62 571 561 [888] **Government.**—There are no chiefs, councils, or any other formal governing bodies in a pygmy camp. In making any decisions concerning the whole camp, two factors are involved. The first of these is respect for older people.

561 571 576 822 [626] A pygmy will always, in addressing a man of an older age group in any formal situation, call him "senior"; he will listen respectfully to an older man and will always obey any reasonable orders he may give. If a younger man shows disrespect, the other members of the camp will gang up on him and berate him. This respect for age, and for the opinions of wise old men, is the basis of pygmy government.

623 571 561 [888] Secondly, while the opinions of most of the old men are respected, every man in the camp is entitled to state his own views on any subject. Thus, during the evening talking time, the pygmies will discuss whether to move camp, where to move it, and why; or whether to go net hunting, and where to hunt. The discussion has no leader and may go on for several evenings. Finally the men who are shouting out different opinions will come to an agreement and the decision will be acted upon.

623 571 561 888 [828] [562] In general it is the older and more experienced men who make the decision, but as some of the old men are considered eccentrics and freaks, little attention is paid to them. Rather, it is an oligarchy of the more respected among the old men, a body with no formal membership or specific composition. In their decisions the pungent remarks of the women also have a considerable influence.

594 ## Pygmy Social Organization

Families and their extensions.—The smallest normal social unit in a pygmy camp is the individual biological

[P. 334-B]